

HFNC Weed Control Report for Nigretta Falls Scenic Reserve 2015

African Weed Orchid (AWO)

This weed was found on this Reserve in 2009. Work has continued annually in Oct-Nov.

As in 2014, Roger Thompson has attacked this pest with zeal, searching on 3 occasions across the entire site. He dug a total of 276 plants in 2015, removing the plants and corms before seed was set:

- 17 Oct – 3.5 hrs, 176 plants dug (about 3 hrs)
- 25 Oct – 60 plants dug (about 1 hr); all very small and probably new
- 31 Oct – 36 plants dug (about 1 hr); little plants dried off but some new large, green plants

AWO remains a serious pest on the Scenic Reserve. This year and last year has seen the most thorough attack on the AWO on the Scenic Reserve. The decline in number of AWO found in 2015 compared with 2014 (a 65% decline) gives some hope that the infestation is being reduced, but the difference may simply be due to a drier year.

Unlike our work in the Flora Reserve across the river, the AWO in the Scenic Reserve are all dug up since that is the simplest and most certain way of removing the pest. However, this approach is much more labour intensive, tedious and practical only in the following cases:

- In the first stage of infestation when the numbers are less than about 1000 plants and can be handled in about 4 hours by 3 or 4 people;
- When the weather is too wet to allow successful herbicide application and it is not possible to find another better opportunity before the plants flower and set seed;
- 'Mopping up' late in spring after most plants have been herbicide-wiped, but some have been missed or new plants have emerged, and would probably have time to set viable seed if herbicide was applied at that late stage.

While the method is simple and requires no specialist tools or use of chemicals, care is needed when digging the plants because the corm (or corms – 2 or 3 'new' corms are sometimes found) is easily detached from the plant and lost if the soil is not adequately loosened before pulling up the plant. A narrow-bladed tool (such as a very large screwdriver) is best used when the soil is hard or the ground is stony. That also reduces collateral damage to adjacent native plants.

The history of attempts to control this pest plant and some others is given below:

- 2015 – 276 AWO dug (5 hr)
- 2014 – 787 AWO dug and 15 plants pulled (15 hrs) – 38 of those were dug in Feb 2015
- 2013 – 230 AWO dug (2 hr)
- 2012 – 70 AWO, 220 Wild Gladiolus, 50 Grevillea and dozens of *Ixia* pulled (2.3 hrs)
- 2011 – 50 AWO dug and 12 Grevillea plants pulled (4 hr)
- 2010 – 180 AWO dug; 615 AWO, 450 Wild Gladiolus, 70 *Ixia* & 87 Grevillea pulled (12 hr)
- 2009 – 217 AWO dug and 104 AWO and 10 *Grevillea rosmarinifolia* pulled (6 hrs)

Blue Periwinkle (*Vinca major*), Phalaris, Cocksfoot, *Ixia*, Wild Gladiolus & *Grevillea rosmarinifolia*

HFNC has not treated any of these weeds in 2015. However, the Shire has contracted Nature Glenelg Trust to do some work on weeds in this reserve and they were observed to have treated some Blue Periwinkle in September.